The Quad City Arts Center's Garden Show is a bright and cheerful exhibit that invites spring to come and stay a while. All participating artists were juried by Quad City Arts after a call for entry. The seven artists selected for the Garden Show were invited to take part because of the common theme in their art – flowers and nature.

The show is dominated mostly by oil and watercolor still lifes and landscapes, with a small sample of photography. Given the large number of pieces exhibited in the show (roughly 30), I have focused on only one or two works by each artist.

The strongest artist featured there is Carolyn Mastroianni. I was impressed by the sheer size and the rich colors of her bold oil paintings. Painted in brilliant yellow, red, and orange with their interiors shaded in mauve, the flowers in *Tulip Trove* are about 100 times their normal size. I felt like a bee must feel when confronted with the heady scent of so much pollen.

Carol Bohl Steinmetz, a watercolor artist, paints a gentle interpretation of a graceful flower in *G olden Elegance*
. In this picture, devoted to just one bloom, a regal peony fills the canvas and looks alive. Steinmetz has brought it to life using light yellow for the petals, brown for the shading, and white to highlight the petal's edges.

Arrangement #1 by Rosemary Smillie is a stylistically painted watercolor of a spray of flowers silhouetted in a transparent vase. Smillie uses muted moss greens and browns for the leaves and foliage, and soft periwinkle blue for the blossoms. The sharp vertical lines of the stems in the vase contrast well with the hazy blur of the flowers. The effect is that of seeing the flowers through a windowpane.

Nina Weiss works in gouache paints. *Shadows at Midland* has a mix of colors that might ordinarily clash but that work beautifully in nature. Her trees are balls of green, ochre, and blue/green, while the sky is awash in pink, white, and lilac, reflected in the river below. A huge tree on the right bank is literally dripping in deep purple and indigo. All the colors run together, giving a waterfall-like effect.

Claudette Klimes paints light and breezy watercolors. *Spring* is fresh and simple – a handpicked bouquet of wild flowers in a variety of colors: pink, red, blue, and yellow. In
Iris
and
Lupins
, she has taken pains to make these elegant flowers more detailed.

Acrylic painter Tina Davidson gives the viewer some variety with her pictures of Illinois wilderness, including a view of the Mississippi from an overlook in Savanna. With great precision, in *Argyle Pines* she has captured the soldier-like attitude of these tall trees standing at attention – their branches held straight out as if saluting each other.

In the background she has painted a small log cabin, just slightly off center, that draws the eye back and forth between it and a tall pine in the foreground. Her sparse choice of colors (green,

gray, brown, and reddish brown) allows the observer to appreciate the picture's finer details.

Marge Schroeder brings photography to the exhibit in black and white and in color. The black-and-white tulip series is pretty but didn't excite me. The photos are close-ups, but she could have zoomed in even nearer to get a more interesting aspect of the flowers than just their half-opened blooms.

Her color photo series *Poppy I-V* provided a closer and more dramatic look at the flower's interior, showing the dark blue stamens contrasting against the bright orange petals.